

REMARKS

No claims have been deleted or amended. Claim 22 has been added. Support for claim 22 is found at least in comparative examples 1-9. With entry of this Amendment, claims 1-22 will be pending in this application

Claims 1-21 stand rejected as being anticipated under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,706,224 to Firgo (Firgo). Applicants do not concede that Firgo is prior art, and reserve the right to antedate this reference.

Independent Claim 1

Independent claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Firgo. Claim 1 recites: "Apparatus for producing continuously molded bodies from a molding material, [. . .], comprising a multitude of extrusion orifices through which during operation the molding material can be extruded into continuously molded bodies, a precipitation bath and an air gap arranged between the extrusion orifices and the precipitation bath, the continuously molded bodies being passed during operation in successive order through the air gap and the precipitation bath, and a gas stream being directed in the area of the air gap to the continuously molded bodies, wherein the air gap directly after extrusion comprises a shielding zone and a cooling area separated from the extrusion orifices by the shielding zone, the cooling area being defined by the gas stream-designed as the cooling gas stream."

The Office action states that Firgo teaches "extruding a composition containing water, cellulose and tertiary amine oxide through a plurality of extrusion orifices . . . [f]orming a substantially planar curtain by the individual continuously molded body; immersing the curtain into a precipitation bath and deflecting the curtain in the precipitation bath by a deflector." The Examiner also states that Firgo teaches in claim 1, "stretching an extruded filament in an air gap."

The Manual of Patent Examining Procedure "MPEP" states that, in order to anticipate a claim, a single reference must teach every element of the claim:

"A claim is anticipated only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference." *Verdegaal Bros. v. Union Oil Co. of California*, 814 F.2d 628, 631, 2 USPQ2d 1051, 1053 (Fed. Cir. 1987). "The identical invention must be shown in as

complete detail as is contained in the ... claim." Richardson v. Suzuki Motor Co., 868 F.2d 1226, 1236, 9 USPQ2d 1913, 1920 (Fed. Cir. 1989)."
See MPEP § 2131

Firgo does not teach or suggest the air gap of claim 1 comprising "a shielding zone and a cooling area separated from the extrusion orifices by the shielding zone, the cooling area being defined by the gas stream—designed as the cooling gas stream." These elements reduce the surface tackiness of the continuously molded bodies. Instead, Firgo discloses a process for producing spunlaid fabrics using conveyors driven at different transportation speeds. Not only does Firgo not teach the elements recited in claim 1, Firgo does not even address surface tackiness.

Applicants respectfully submit that Firgo therefore fails to disclose each and every element of claim 1, and does not anticipate claim 1. Accordingly, allowance of claim 1 is respectfully requested.

Dependent Claims 2-17

Claims 2-17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Firgo. Claims 2-17 depend from allowable claim 1, and are therefore allowable. Claims 2-17 may contain additional patentable subject matter for reasons that may not be discussed herein. Allowance of claims 2-17 is respectfully requested.

Independent Claim 18

Independent claim 18 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Firgo. Claim 18 recites: "A method for producing continuously molded bodies from a molding material, [...] the molding material being first extruded to obtain continuously molded bodies, the continuously molded bodies being then passed through the air gap and stretched in said air gap and blown at with a gas stream, and the continuously molded bodies being then guided through a precipitation bath, wherein the continuously molded bodies in air gap are first passed through a shielding zone and then through a cooling area, the blowing operation being performed in the cooling area by means of the gas stream—designed as the cooling gas stream."

Firgo does not teach or suggest the elements of claim 18 of "blown at with a gas stream" nor "the blowing operation being performed in the cooling area by means of the gas stream designed as the cooling gas stream." These elements reduce the surface tackiness of the

continuously molded bodies. Instead, Firgo teaches a process for producing spunlaid fabrics using conveyors driven at different transportation speeds. Not only does Firgo not teach the elements recited in claim 18, Firgo does not even address surface tackiness.

Applicants respectfully submit that Firgo therefore fails to disclose each and every element of claim 18, and does not anticipate claim 18. Accordingly, allowance of claim 18 is respectfully requested.

Dependent Claims 19-21

Claims 19-21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by Firgo. Claims 19-21 depend from allowable claim 18, and are therefore allowable. Claims 19-21 may contain additional patentable subject matter for reasons that may not be discussed herein. Allowance of claims 19-21 is respectfully requested.

New Independent Claim 22

The prior art does not teach or suggest the subject matter of claim 22. Specifically, the prior art does not teach or suggest a method for reducing the surface tackiness of a molding material, comprising:

- (a) extruding the molding material to obtain continuously molded bodies;
- (b) stretching the continuously molded bodies through an air gap, the air gap comprising a shielding zone and a cooling area, wherein the continuously molded bodies are blown at with a cooling gas stream in the cooling area, thereby reducing the surface tackiness of the molding material;
- (c) guiding the continuously molded bodies through a precipitation bath.

Accordingly, allowance of new independent claim 22 is respectfully requested.

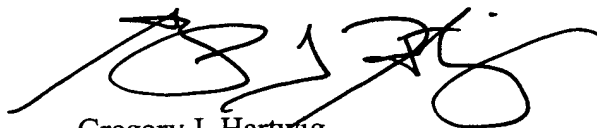
CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-21 and consideration and allowance of claim 22 are respectfully requested. The Examiner is strongly encouraged to contact the undersigned by telephone at the Examiner's convenience should any issues remain.

Please charge the fees associated with the Request for Extension of Time to deposit account number 13-3080. No additional fees are believed to be due in connection with this

submission. However, if any additional fees are owed, please charge such fees to deposit account number 13-3080.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. J. Hartwig', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

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